



**CAR FREE DAY STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
Wednesday March 9, 2016**

1. Introductions

Committee members, guests and other attendees introduced themselves by name and affiliation.

2. Meeting Minutes

The Committee approved the September 9, 2015 meeting notes as written.

3. Recap of 2015 Event

A comprehensive event report was distributed which highlighted the various marketing and promotional aspects of the September 22, 2015 event.

An all new Car Free Day poster was created, printed and delivered to network members. The poster took a team approach with the message, “Join a team that fits your mobility best”. The call to action directed people to www.carfreemetrodc.org to take the team pledge.

A Car Free Day 2015 proclamation signing took place at the July TPB meeting. Phil Mendelson, TPB Chair, and District of Columbia Councilmember signed an enlarged proclamation. A photo of the signing was placed onto the Car Free Day web site and social media. Several jurisdictions adopted Car Free Day proclamations of their own.

The Car Free Day web site was upgraded to responsive web design for Car Free Day 2015, which was launched in mid-August. The website contained enhanced functionality that allowed for easy access from smartphones and tablets and included a real time leaderboard displaying mode pledges by team. Email blasts were sent out to employers and past Car Free Day participants. Text messages prompting participants to encourage friends and family to pledge were sent to those who provided their cell phone numbers during the pledge process.

Media releases built momentum, beginning with a calendar listing one month prior to the event, and continuing with two press releases, each focused on a different benefit of participation. Coordinated media pitching followed the distribution of each release, with direct contact with media outlets throughout the region. The publicity team

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.E., SUITE 300, WASHINGTON, DC 20002-4290

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encouraged media outlets to place news stories about Car Free Day, and secured interviews. A total of 41 known placements appeared in newspapers, radio, television, newsletters and blogs, most notably the Washington Post, WTOP, WMAL and WUSA9. Draft radio scripts were developed and presented to the Steering Committee and revised, based on feedback. Voiceover talent was selected for the radio ad and a 30 second commercial was produced. The spot aired for several weeks leading up to through the event on WASH, WBIG, WTOP and WIHT.

Bus signage was secured for Car Free Day from several jurisdictions; artwork was created reflecting the poster graphics and then printed, shipped, and installed at the various transit properties. Signage appeared on Montgomery County Ride On, Metrobus, Arlington Transit, and on Prince George's bus shelters. A complimentary internet banner ad was also created for placement onto the Metro website.

The Capital Area Car Free College Campus Challenge was created as a friendly competition to generate a buzz about Car Free Day on college campuses in the region. Eight universities encouraged their students, faculty and administration to take the Car Free pledge. They included Georgetown University, George Washington University, University of Maryland, George Mason University, American University, Northern Virginia Community College, Howard University, and the University of the District of Columbia. With 86 percent of the pledges, Georgetown won by a landslide.

Social media accounts were updated to reflect graphics from the 2015 poster. Facebook postings and tweets were placed on a regular basis to help promote Car Free Day activities and sponsors, engage with the public, garner more friends and followers, and to keep the Car Free Day event topical. Car Free Day added over 100 Facebook likes in 2015, for a total of nearly 4,000. Car Free Day increased its followers on Twitter by 125, for a total of 600. The following hashtags were created for the various teams: #TEAMBUS, #TEAMRAIL, #TEAMPOOL, #TEAMBIKE, #TEAMWALK, and #TEAMTELEWORK. A promotional video was filmed with the Committee Chair for use on social media. In addition, a paid ad was placed on Facebook.

Donated prizes were offered as incentives to people pledging to go car free or car-lite. Businesses and organizations who donated goods or services gained exposure and were associated with a cause that contributed to the betterment of the region's traffic congestion and air quality. Sponsors included BicycleSPACE, Bike and Roll DC, goDCgo (Capital Bikeshare), KIND Healthy Snacks, Mellow Mushroom, Six Flags, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, VRE, and WMATA.

Commuter Connections' network members hosted numerous events and promotions to celebrate the trial of and use of car free alternatives. Jurisdictions that participated with an event or promotion were Arlington, Fairfax, Frederick, Loudoun, Montgomery, Prince George's, and Southern Maryland Counties, and the City of Alexandria. Stickers

were created for each of the six team transportation modes and were provided to the jurisdictional partners for distribution to Car Free Day participants.

A total of 3,442 people took the pledge to go Car Free or Car-Lite on September 22. The breakdown by mode is as follows: Team Bike 35%, Team Rail 22%, Team Bus 17%, Team Walk 13%, Team Telework 8%, and Team Pool 5%. The SOV group consisted of 25% of those who pledged and reduced 17,596 vehicle miles. Pledges were made by residents of Virginia 36%, Maryland 31%, District 32%, and Other 1%.

4. Car Free Day 2016 Date/Goal

This year Car Free Day will be held on Thursday, September 22, 2016, and the goal will remain at 10,000 pledges.

5. Marketing Materials

The Committee discussed the use of last year's team concept and voted to stick with the same theme. Feedback was very positive on the event web site and a suggestion was to make the pledge button appear above the 'scroll fold'.

The Committee agreed that if possible, it would be great to be able to give something to everyone who pledges, i.e. a free lunch coupon. The company would have to have a large regional presence in order for it to be of benefit to a large majority of residents.

6. Other Business

The next Car Free Day meeting will be held on May 11, 2016 from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm in meeting rooms 4 & 5.